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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS, RECALL OF
PRESIDENT CHEN SHUI-BIAN

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their coverage June 20 on President Chen Shui-bian's decision to deliver a televised speech Tuesday evening in response to the recall motion; the pan-Blue camp's moves to bring Chen down; further investigations into the alleged role of First Lady Wu Shu-chen in the Sogo Department Store ownership case; and a local train accident-turned-murder case. The pro-status quo "China Times" ran a front-page banner headline that said "Reporting to the People But Not Taking Questions, Bian Will Deliver Monologue Today, While Ma Will Challenge Tomorrow." The pro-independence "Liberty Times," Taiwan's biggest daily, ran a banner headline on page two that read "Reporting to the People, Bian Will Appear on TV This Evening to Counterattack against Reasons for Recall Motion." The pro-unification "United Daily News" front-paged "Pan-Blue Camp Will Speed up No-Confidence Motion After It Fails to Recall Chen."

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" criticized China's move to promote "peace" in international affairs, saying it cannot veil Beijing's expansionism. An editorial in the limited-circulation, conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" said U.S. war games in Guam are Washington's response to China's rapid rise. An editorial in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times," on the other hand, criticized the pan-Blue camp's recall motion, saying it only "demonstrated to the general public what a bitter, hateful bunch they really are." End summary.

¶3. U.S.-China-Taiwan Relations

A) "U.S.-China in Sync on Taiwan"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] wrote in an editorial (6/20):

"For the first time, China's military has a 10-member observation team at a massive U.S. war game launched yesterday in Guam, the newly reinforced American base close to Asia's likely trouble spots. The long-standing danger of Taiwan becoming a reason to go to war against China has prompted a broad U.S. military realignment in recent years. The Guam base is America's response to China's rapid rise....

"Beijing is ready to subscribe to the U.S. designation that Taiwan is 'a self-ruled democratic Chinese non-state beyond Beijing's jurisdiction.' And the U.S. has shown greater readiness to comply with Chinese wishes on Taiwan: no FTA pact, no military collaboration, no high-profile visit to the U.S. and no membership in the United Nations and the World Health Organization. As long as Taiwan calls itself the diplomatically non-existent Republic of

China, Beijing will not force reunification with the island. As Taiwan's mentor and protector for six decades, the U.S. has the power and need to guarantee that. With Taiwan's independence movement restrained, cross-strait tensions can be defused and the island's economic prospects will brighten up rapidly."

B) "'Peace' Cannot Veil PRC Expansionism"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (6/20):

"... In the past two years, 'peace' has been added to Beijing's diplomatic recipes in the wake of concerns over China's development into a regional economic and military powerhouse. In stark contradiction with its aggressive expansion of its military forces and its continued build-up of offensive forces directed at Taiwan, China is energetically flying the banner of 'peace,' one of the world's paramount universal values. ...

"It is widely believed that Beijing's touting of the concept of 'peace' comprises a 'defensive' concept against the United States, which remains the world's only superpower. In response to China's projection of military force through its drive to build a 'sea-going' naval force with aircraft carriers and advanced conventional and nuclear submarines and its regional alliance-building, the U.S. is now devoting more attention to Asia. Washington is thus quietly working to bolster its own web of alliances with Northeast Asia's Japan, South Korea and, to a certain extent, Taiwan, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand in Southeast Asia, India and Pakistan in South Asia and even into Central Asia. Hence, if China cannot enhance the transparency of its military build-up, deployments and strategic purpose, Beijing's efforts to organize regional blocks or alliances will create more tension even though the ostensive intention is to project a benign image. ..."

14. Recall of President Chen Shui-bian

"Pan-Blue Recall Bid a Sick Joke"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (6/20):

"It's about time that the pan-blue camp realized what damage it is doing to Taiwan and put an end to its ridiculous efforts to recall the president. ... But the saddest thing about this whole recall affair is that it has cruelly exposed Ma's weak position. Many fence-sitting Taiwanese must have had high hopes for Ma and the KMT after he swept to the chairmanship last year on promises of clean politics and party reform. ... By letting himself be press-ganged into supporting the recall bid, Ma has shown that the same deep-blue elements that cannot stand to see Taiwan ruled by a pro-localization regime still hold the KMT's reins of power. It has become increasingly clear that they will stop at nothing in their bid to oust the president, even if it means creating more division in Taiwan's already deeply-split society. The high threshold required to recall the president means that their bid has been doomed from the start, and the pan-blue camp is well aware of this. They have only further demonstrated to the general public what a bitter, hateful bunch they really are."

KEEGAN